General Assembly

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Fifty-eighth session
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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/58/503)*]

58/151. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office[1] and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-fourth session[2] and the conclusions and decisions contained therein,

Recalling its previous annual resolutions on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since its establishment by the General Assembly,

Expressing its appreciation for the leadership shown by the High Commissioner, commending the staff and implementing partners of the Office of the High Commissioner for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, and underscoring its strong condemnation of all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel are increasingly exposed,

1. *Endorses* the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fifty-fourth session;[2]

2. *Welcomes* the important work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its Executive Committee in the course of the year, and notes in this context the conclusions adopted on international protection, on the return of persons found not to be in need of international protection, on protection safeguards in interception measures, and on protection from sexual abuse and exploitation,[3] which are aimed at strengthening the international protection regime, consistent with the Agenda for Protection[4] resulting from the Global Consultations on International Protection, and at assisting

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/58/12).
[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/58/12/Add.1).
[3] Ibid., chap. III, sects. B–E.
[4] Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/57/12/Add.1), annex IV.

Governments in meeting their protection responsibilities in today's changing international environment;

3. *Reaffirms* the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[5] and its 1967 Protocol[6] as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime, and recognizes the importance of their full and effective application by States parties and the values they embody, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and forty-five States are now parties to one instrument or to both, encourages States not parties to consider acceding to those instruments, underlines in particular the importance of full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and recognizes that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees;

4. *Notes* that fifty-five States are now parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons[7] and that twenty-seven States are parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[8] and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his activities on behalf of stateless persons;

5. *Re-emphasizes* that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions;

6. *Emphasizes* that international protection is a dynamic and action-oriented function that is at the core of the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner and which includes, in cooperation with States and other partners, the promotion and facilitation of, inter alia, the admission, reception and treatment of refugees and the ensuring of durable, protection-oriented solutions, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups, and notes in this context that the delivery of international protection is a staff-intensive service that requires adequate staff with the appropriate expertise, especially at the field level;

7. *Welcomes* the High Commissioner's "Convention Plus" initiative,[9] and encourages the High Commissioner and those States that have offered to facilitate Convention Plus agreements to strengthen the international protection regime through the development of comprehensive approaches to resolving refugee situations, including improving international burden- and responsibility-sharing and realizing durable solutions;

8. *Recalls* the important role of effective partnerships and coordination in meeting the needs of refugees and other displaced persons and in finding durable solutions to their situations, and welcomes the efforts under way, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and development actors, to promote a framework for durable solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations, including the "4Rs" approach (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) to sustainable return;

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[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[6] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[7] Ibid., vol. 360, No. 5158.

[8] Ibid., vol. 989, No. 14458.

[9] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/58/12), para. 24.

9. *Urges* all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, in a spirit of international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, to cooperate and to mobilize resources with a view to enhancing the capacity of, and reducing the heavy burden borne by, countries that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, and calls upon the Office to continue to play its catalytic role in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the root causes as well as the economic, environmental and social impact of large-scale refugee populations in developing countries, particularly least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition;

10. *Strongly reaffirms* the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the High Commissioner of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems, and recalls that these solutions include voluntary repatriation and, where appropriate and feasible, local integration and resettlement in a third country, while reaffirming that voluntary repatriation, supported by necessary rehabilitation and development assistance to facilitate sustainable reintegration, remains the preferred solution;

11. *Emphasizes* the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a safe and humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

12. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to improve its management systems and to ensure effective and transparent use of its resources, recognizes that adequate and timely resources are essential for the Office to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it through its statute[10] and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions concerning refugees and other persons of concern, and urges Governments and other donors to respond promptly to annual and supplementary appeals issued by the Office for requirements under its programmes;

13. *Requests* the High Commissioner to report on his activities to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

77th plenary meeting
22 December 2003

[10] Resolution 428 (V), annex.